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Dating menus: You can change yours

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Just like medicine, dating is getting highly specialized
- You can find groups based on money or special interests
- Stoplight parties ensure you know who's available
- Pets, jobs, hobbies or authors can define your dating pool

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(LifeWire) -- For singles suffering from Goldilocks syndrome -- this person's too beefy, that one's too scrawny; person's too rich, that one's not rich enough -- niche dating may help you find a match that's just right.



Whatever your aim or interest, dating trends such as these go beyond wine tasting events and friend-of-a-friend referrals.

Money and beauty matches

It's true: Money can't buy you love, but being wealthy might get you a date.

"I think through time, hot women and rich men have proven that they are attracted to each other," says Jeremy Abelson -- and yes, he's totally serious.

To test his theory, Abelson, 27, organized the first-ever Natural Selection Speed Date: Rich Guys Hot Girls event, which took place February 7, in New York City.

"I thought this was a liberation for people. Like, you could stop holding it in and say, 'Okay, finally somebody's come out and said it,'" he says.

The name of the event was no joke. Men had to make over \$200,000 annually if they were under 25 years old; 26- to 29-year-olds had to make \$300,000; men 30 and up had to gross half a million.

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Women, meanwhile, needed to be supermodel-hot, as judged by celeb matchmaker Janis Spindel. Of the 40 men and 40 women who were selected for the event, Abelson claims it was a smashing success, with over half the attendees having some sort of post-event connection.

Critics have used words like "crass" and "shallow" to describe such events. But that hasn't stopped Abelson, who says he's recently inked a deal to create a reality television show where wealthy men will woo attractive women.

Meanwhile, online dating sites like [MillionaireMatch.com](#) allow singles who earn more than \$150,000 a year a chance to find true love (and possibly a hefty trust fund to boot). Socially appalling yet brutally honest, these systems are something of a pre-screening process for those who aren't afraid of "sugar daddy" or "gold digger" labels.

Stoptlight parties

For less fiscally focused singles, stoptlight parties don't have paycheck requirements. Instead, these mixers take the guesswork out of dating.

"A lot of the time when you go out, you can't tell who's available and who's not," says Holly Messa, director of marketing at Republic, a nightclub and event space in New Orleans. Throwing a stoptlight party, as Republic this May, changes all that.

Every person's relationship status is on display: singles wear green, people who are in open relationships dress in yellow, and people in committed relationships (usually along to act as wingmen for their single friends) wear red, Messa explains.

Though this was the first stoptlight party the venue has thrown, by 11 p.m., the 1,000-person space had more than 750 people vying for each other's attention in between downing red-, yellow- or green-colored specialty drinks.

Other clubs and bars have had the same idea; stoptlight parties have been cropping up in bars from California to Florida for a while.

Lock and key parties

At lock and key parties women wear small padlocks and men wear keys around their necks, with the goal being to find your match.

"What's great about this concept is guys can approach women and not get rejected on the spot," says Darren Waldholz, 40, president and owner of [Lock and Key Events](#) headquartered in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. "They can at least try out their key on the lock as an icebreaker."

Typically, a key fits a couple locks. If a couple finds that theirs match, they get raffle tickets for a prize drawing. The main point of this gimmick is just to have fun and break the ice, organizers say.


What started as an updated version of a college theme party has become a bona fide business, with parties thrown in more than 60 cities nationwide, many on a monthly basis.

And to give this mixer its due, the events actually have success stories: "We had a couple get married and wear their locks and keys at their wedding around their necks," Waldholz says.

Pet friends and other niche sites

Online sites like [AnimalAttraction.com](#) and [DateMyPet.com](#) are geared toward pet-lovers. Users can create profiles that not only describe themselves, but Fido, too. DateMyPet.com, for example, sometimes sponsors parties for singles and their four-legged friends. Like lock and key parties, pet parties use a gimmick -- in this case, your Pomeranian or Persian -- as an icebreaker.

Not a pet person? Other niche dating sites abound: [AtrTroductions.com](#), singles can post their flight schedule in hopes of finding someone interesting on their flight to share an armrest; bodybuilders spot each other at [Cyberworkoutbuddy.com](#); truckers pair up at [8WheelSingles.com](#); disabled singles connect at [LoveByrd.com](#); and Ayn Rand fans can find love at [TheAtlasphere.com](#).

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